

CLAIMS

(1) A data output controller that is communicably connected, via a network, to a portable terminal that is possessed by a user, issues a data print request, and features portability, and a plurality of output terminals that is distributed and installed at various locations to print data, receives a data print request from the portable terminal, and outputs data regarding the data print request to the output terminals, the data output controller comprising:

storage means for storing output terminal information regarding the output terminals for each of the output terminals, selecting means for selecting one of the plurality of output terminals, and output means for outputting the data regarding the data print request to the output terminal selected by the selecting means,

wherein the data print request includes search data necessary for the selecting means to select the output terminal, and

the selecting means retrieves output terminal information from the storage means on the basis of the search data contained in the data print request so as to select an output terminal considered to be the best suited for the user of the portable terminal to receive provided output data.

(2) A data output controller according to claim 1, wherein

the output terminal information includes data on an output terminal position for determining the location where the output terminal is installed, and the search data may include data on a portable terminal position for determining the position of the portable terminal,

the selecting means retrieves output terminal position data from the storage means on the basis of data on a portable terminal position contained in the search data, thereby selecting an output terminal considered to be the closest distance-wise or time-wise, taking the position of the portable terminal as the reference.

(3) A data output controller according to one of claims 1 and 2, wherein

the output terminal information includes data on an output terminal position for determining a location where the output terminal is installed, and the search data may include data on a desired providing area that indicates a desired providing area, which is an approximate place where output data is desired to be provided,

the selecting means retrieves data on an output terminal position from the storage means on the basis of the data on a desired providing area included in the search data thereby to select an output terminal located in an area specified by the data

on a desired providing area.

(4) A data output controller according to claim 3, wherein

the selecting means does not perform search based on the data on a portable terminal position if the position specified by the data on a portable terminal position is not included in the area specified by the data on a desired providing area included in the search data.

(5) A data output controller according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein

the output terminal information includes printing format data indicating a data format that can be printed by the output terminal among data formats of data regarding the data print request, and the search data may include the printing format data, and

the selecting means retrieves printing format data from the storage means on the basis of the printing format data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal associated with the printing format data.

(6) A data output controller according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein

the output terminal information includes printing specification data indicating the printing specification of the output terminal, and the search data may include the printing specification data, and

the selecting means retrieves printing specification data from the storage means on the basis of printing specification data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal associated with the printing specification data.

(7) A data output controller according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein

the output terminal information includes output terminal identifying data for identifying the output terminals, and the search data may include the output terminal identifying data, and

the selecting means retrieves output terminal identifying data from the storage means solely on the basis of output terminal identifying data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal that coincides with the output terminal identifying data.

(8) A data output controller according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein

the output means outputs output terminal information corresponding to an output terminal selected by the selecting means to the portable terminal.

(9) A data output controller that is communicably connected, via a network, to a portable terminal that is possessed by a user, issues a data output request, and features portability, and a plurality of output terminals that are distributed and

installed at various locations to output data, receives a data output request from the portable terminal, and outputs data regarding the data output request to the output terminals, the data output controller comprising:

storage means for storing output terminal information regarding the output terminals for each of the output terminals, selecting means for selecting one of the plurality of output terminals, and output means for outputting the data regarding the data output request to an output terminal selected by the selecting means,

wherein the data output request includes search data necessary for the selecting means to select the output terminal, and

the selecting means retrieves output terminal information from the storage means on the basis of the search data contained in the data output request so as to select an output terminal considered to be the best suited for the user of the portable terminal to receive provided output data.

(10) A data output controller according to claim 9, wherein

the output terminal information includes data on an output terminal position for determining the location where the output terminal is installed, and the search data may include data on a portable terminal position for determining the position of the portable terminal,

the selecting means retrieves data on an output terminal position from the storage means on the basis of the data on a portable terminal position contained in the search data, thereby selecting an output terminal considered to be the closest distance-wise or time-wise, taking the position of the portable terminal as the reference.

(11) A data output controller according to one of claims 9 and 10, wherein

the output terminal information includes data on an output terminal position for determining a location where the output terminal is installed, and the search data may include desired providing area data that indicates a desired providing area, which is an approximate place where output data is desired to be provided,

the selecting means retrieves data on an output terminal position from the storage means on the basis of the data on a desired providing area included in the search data thereby to select an output terminal located in an area specified by the data on a desired providing area.

(12) A data output controller according to claim 11, wherein

the selecting means does not perform search based on data on a portable terminal position if the position specified by the data on a portable terminal position is

not included in the area specified by data on a desired providing area included in the search data.

(13) A data output controller according to any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein

5 the output terminal information includes output format data indicating a data format that can be output by the output terminal among data formats of data regarding the data output request, and the search data may include the output format data, and

the selecting means retrieves output format data from the storage means on the basis of the output format data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal associated with the output format data.

10 (14) A data output controller according to any one of claims 9 to 13, wherein

the output terminal information includes output specification data indicating the output specification of the output terminal, and the search data may include the output specification data, and

the selecting means retrieves output specification data from the storage means on the basis of output specification data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal associated with the output specification data.

15 (15) A data output controller according to any one of claims 9 to 14, wherein

the output terminal information includes output terminal identifying data for identifying the output terminals, and the search data may include the output terminal identifying data, and

the selecting means retrieves output terminal identifying data from the storage means solely on the basis of output terminal identifying data included in the search data, and selects an output terminal that coincides with the output terminal identifying data.

20 (16) A data output controller according to any one of claims 9 to 15, wherein

the output means outputs output terminal information corresponding to an output terminal selected by the selecting means to the portable terminal.